

# Achievement Award and Performance Recognition Policy

## Description

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) is committed to recognizing and rewarding the outstanding work of all its employees through the issuance of achievement awards and other recognition programs. The following statements serve as the agencies guiding principles:

- There will always be informal, ongoing recognition and appreciation for work well done.
- The recognition system communicates management's belief that employees are the agencies greatest asset.
- Recognition reflects practice of the department's core values.
- Criteria for recognition encourage cooperation and involvement rather than competition, maintaining opportunities for recognition of both individual and team efforts.
- The recognition system communicates what is important to the department, why we are all here, and the goals to be achieved.
- Recognition reflects expectations for quality results in products, processes and services, or recognition of service above and beyond the call of duty.
- Rewards are defined by the business needs of the organization, that is:
  - To promote individual, team and organization success.
  - To link numerous "little efforts" to a large effort with greater impact.
  - To reflect the highest ethical and professional standards for the organization.
  - To encourage and promote staff development.

## Reason for Policy:

To establish uniform procedures for nominating employees for an achievement award or other recognition when the contract does not allow for achievement awards and issuance of the awards.

## Applicability:

All DHS employees subject to the provisions of collective bargaining agreements and plans.

## Failure to Comply:

Failure to comply with this policy and its procedures may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## Policy

- Achievement awards and other recognition programs will be funded from the recipient's respective division budget. If the payment of an achievement award or recognition program will create a deficit for a business area, the Assistant Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner must work with the DHS Chief Financial Officer to determine if the department can provide funding to support the award.
- Enterprise operations cannot be supplemented with other funds, so they must include achievement awards and other recognition programs in their budget allocations.
- Nominees must be a current DHS employee at the time of the issuance of an achievement award or recognition.
- Unless otherwise required by contract, all awards will be in the form of a lump sum. If the contract does not provide for achievement awards, the employee may be provided with an opportunity to attend non-assigned training and development opportunities, paid for by the department that would benefit the employees' current work or future goals at DHS.

Training and development opportunities/stipends must be used within one (1) year of issuance.

## Procedures:

1. Any DHS employee may nominate an individual. Types of outstanding performance that will be considered in the nomination process include:
  - **Team recognition** – Groups of employees who have delivered outstanding work on a special project or overcome particular and unusual challenge.
  - **Project recognition** – Employee has done outstanding work outside of normal job parameters.
  - **Individual performance** – Employee has delivered outstanding individual performance.
  - **Cost saving/Efficiency recognition (Team or Individual)** – Results-based efforts made to reduce the cost of state government or for providing more efficient state services that have resulted in extraordinary cost savings to the state. The cost savings cannot reduce the quality of service provided.
  - **Diversity recognition** - Outstanding work and/or accomplishments in the field of diversity, equity, inclusion and/or anti-racism that has resulted in a positive work environment or initiative within DHS.
2. Each individual Assistant/Deputy Commissioner, DCT Executive Director, or DCT Health Systems CEO will be responsible for reviewing nominations and selecting individuals/teams to receive an award or recognition.

3. If the nomination is approved, the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner, DCT Executive Director, or DCT Health Systems CEO will submit the DHS Achievement Award Nomination form to the Human Resource Office.
4. If the nomination is not approved by the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner, DCT Executive Director, or DCT Health Systems CEO s/he or their assigned designee will notify the nominator that the award was not approved.
5. Nominations received will be reviewed by Human Resources to ensure all required information is included on the nomination form, all signatures have been obtained, a current performance evaluation is on file certifying the employee's performance is above expectations or higher for individual nominations or satisfactory or better performance when nominated as a team member, the employee is not the subject of an active employment investigation, the employee does not have any active letters of expectation on file, the employee does not have any formal discipline on record in the prior 2 years, and the employee has not received any other achievement award during the fiscal year (only one achievement award per fiscal year is allowed).
6. Human Resources will maintain a record to ensure DHS does not go over the allocation of awards either monetarily or by contractual limitation.
7. Once decisions are finalized Human Resources will send a congratulatory notice to the employee with a copy to the supervisor and the nominator.
8. Human Resources will coordinate payment of the award with Financial Operations.

If the recognition is in the form of training and development opportunities the supervisor is to work in partnership with the individual employee to assess training opportunities and coordinate enrollment. Training and development opportunities/stipends must be used within one (1) year of issuance.

## Forms that apply:

[Achievement Award Nomination Form](#)

## Related Policies and References:

- [43A.18, 2011 Minnesota Statutes Total Compensation](#) (Minnesota Statutes site)
- [Collective Bargaining Agreements and Plans](#) (Minnesota Management and Budget site)

## Legal Authority:

[43A.18, 2011 Minnesota Statutes Total Compensation](#) (Minnesota Statutes site)

## Definitions:

**Achievement Awards:** A useful management tool to be used to recognize outstanding performance. They are payments to a limited number of employees in a bargaining unit whose contract or plan provides for such

awards. They are completely discretionary, i.e., each agency can decide whether or not to grant them, how and when, subject to the conditions specified in the collective bargaining agreement and plans. They may be granted in each fiscal year unless otherwise specified in the applicable contract/plan.

## Policy Contact(s)

**Name:** [Mary Buss](#)

**Phone:** 651-431-2842

[workplace\\_policies@state.mn.us](mailto:workplace_policies@state.mn.us)

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This policy and its procedures remain in effect until rescinded or updated.